

## QUARTERLY STATUS REPORT

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**DATE:** January 18, 2005

### **STREAMLINING**

**PROJECT:** Evaluation of Wildlife Crossing Structures on US Highway 93 Evaro to Polson—Phase 1: Pre-construction data collection and finalization of evaluation

**START DATE:** March 1, 2002

### **EXPECTED**

**COMPLETION DATE:** June 30, 2006

**FUNDING LEVEL:** \$562,500 (including 20% match from Montana Department of Transportation)

### **ANTICIPATED**

#### **PRODUCTS:**

- Memo to Technical Design Committee on monitoring design considerations (completed May 2002)
- Animal-vehicle collision database (60% complete)
- Field Methods and Safety Protocol Handbook (90% complete)
- Summary of literature and existing data (60% complete)
- Memo defining the Measures of Effectiveness (75% complete)
- Long-term Research and Monitoring Evaluation Plan (50% complete)
- Phase 1 Pre-construction Case Study (30% complete)
- Pre-construction field data summary report (40% complete)

### **MEASURABLE**

#### **RESULTS:**

(i.e. how did the project advance environmental streamlining)

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**PLEASE PROVIDE THE STATUS OF ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTS (E.G., PROJECT MILESTONES, DELIVERABLES, PRODUCT DISSEMINATION, RELEVANT DIVISION ACTIVITIES) FOR THE PROJECT IN THE APPROPRIATE SPACE(S) BELOW.**

#### FOURTH REPORTING PERIOD (10/1/04-12/31/04)

Division Contact: Bob Seliskar

Funding Spent-to-Date: \$497,555.33

Funding Balance Remaining: \$64,944.67

#### ***On-going Activities***

- Literature search and compilation of relevant data.

- Mentoring Whisper Maillet, WTI Graduate Fellow supported in cooperation with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), with her thesis field research on US 93 deer crossings and deer-vehicle mortalities.

#### ***October & November 2004***

- Tracking bed crossing data were collected through October 16, 2004. Summary of the 2004 tracking bed data collection follows:
  - Our field crew observed tracks in 38 tracking beds (4079 meters total) in the Evaro, Ravalli Curves, and Ravalli Hills areas every 3-5 days for 34 tracking sessions between June 21, 2004 and October 16, 2004.
  - A total of 2,448 observations of deer, bear, canids (dogs, coyotes), elk, horse, moose, mountain lion, rabbit, skunk, and small/medium/large mammals were identified to varying degrees of certainty.
  - We recorded a total of 83 bear and 548 deer crossing events (these are the observations where the animal was identified with the highest level of certainty and the behavior was positively identified as a “crossing”).
  - All 2004 tracking data have been entered into Excel. Photos (for questionable track identification issues) have been archived as well.
- Graduate Fellow Whisper Maillet continued graduate classes at MSU and spent the fall semester preparing her data for analyses. See previous quarterly report for brief description of her approach.
- MDT Biologist Pat Basting suggested WTI survey local residents along US93 corridor regarding how they would define “success” for the wildlife mitigation to include in the measures of effectiveness report. WTI agreed this would be an excellent contribution to that report, but respectfully pointed out that the scope and budget can not accommodate this task at this point.

#### ***December 2004***

- Graduate Fellow Whisper Maillet passed her preliminary oral exams. She is registered for spring classes and anticipates finishing her data analyses and write-up of her thesis this spring.

#### ***Summary***

Bear study has completed field studies and a thesis has been drafted (defense date set for January 28, 2005; final thesis expected to be delivered by March 31, 2005). Deer study is in process of analyses and drafting of thesis (draft thesis expected by May 2005).

Tracking beds were monitored through October 16, 2004, and data has been entered into a spreadsheet. Road-kill data collection, tracking bed data collection protocols are all in place as are databases and quality assurance/quality control systems. All protocols are documented in the Field Methods Handbook. Field Methods Handbook and Measures of Effectiveness are overdue, but we expect to deliver these products in draft form to MDT for review by March. WTI would like to address how changes in construction schedules and special requests for tasks beyond the original scope may affect the remainder of the pre-construction monitoring work (scope and budget); we hope to provide that summary report to MDT by March.